

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 were previously pending in the present application. Claims 17 and 18 are hereby cancelled, and claims 1, 14 and 19 are hereby amended. Claims 1-16 and 19 remain pending as amended. In light of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Objection to Specification and § 112 Rejections

The specification objection at paragraph 1 of the above Office action has been addressed as suggested by the Examiner. Specifically, paragraph 48 of the specification is hereby amended to replace "deck" (at page 9, line 1) with "base."

Claims 14 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The rejections stated in paragraphs 3-5 of the above Office action are believed to be overcome by the amendments made herein to these claims. Specifically, claim 14 is hereby amended to be in independent form including the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 12, and no longer depends from claim 13. With regard to claim 19, the term "may be placed" is hereby replaced with "is disposed." These amendments are believed to sufficiently address the cited rejections.

§§ 102/103 Art Rejections

All of the originally pending claims 1-19 were rejected, either for lack of novelty or for being obvious, in view of the disclosure of Tagg (U.S. Pat. No. 5,560,050), either alone or in combination with several other references of record. The Examiner's remarks with respect to claims 14 and 19 (at paras. 14 and 26, respectively, of the above Office action) indicated that it would be viewed favorably by the Patent Office if the claims were amended to recite: (1) with respect to the subject matter of claim 14, that the bosses for fastening the wear plates are molded into the runners "adjacent" the locations of the indicators, and (2) with respect to claim 19, a more substantial structural relationship between the cover, openings and weights. The claims have been so amended herein.

Claim 1 (and thus claims 2-13) now recite that the general subject matter of cancelled claims 17 and 18 albeit with the structural relationship being stated in a

more substantial manner. Specifically, amended claim 1 and dependents now require that "at least one of the bottom openings receives a weight that is retained within said at least one bottom opening by a cover fastened to the skid base so as to essentially close off said at least one bottom opening from the bottom." These claims thus now expressly state the structural interrelation between opening, weight and cover features of the skid base sufficiently to distinguish the cited art.

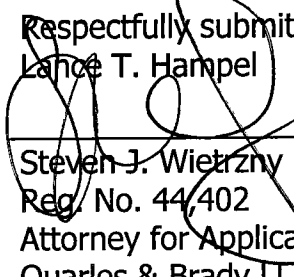
In addition, claim 14 is now cast in independent form including the subject matter of base claim 1 and intervening claim 12. Claim 14 has also been amended to replace the term "at" with "adjacent," so as to expressly recite that the bosses for fastening the wear plates are molded into the runners adjacent the locations of the indicators, as suggested by the Office. Claim 14 is thus believed to now be in allowable form. Note, as also suggested by the Office, that claim 14 does not include the recitations of claim 13.

Conclusion

Accordingly, claims 1-16 and 19 have now been amended as directed by the Office, and are therefore believed to be in allowable form. Allowance of these claims is thus respectfully requested. Should any issues remain that interfere with the allowance of the application, the Applicant asks that the Examiner please contact the undersigned by telephone at the number below.

No fees are believed due for filing this response. However, should any additional fees be needed for full consideration of this amendment, authorization is hereby given to charge any fees deemed necessary to Deposit Account 17-0055.

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Respectfully submitted,
Lance T. Hampel
By: 
Steven J. Wietrzny
Reg. No. 44,402
Attorney for Applicant
Quarles & Brady LLP
411 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 277-5415